



The President's Daily Brief

1 August 1973

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

1 August 1973

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

China's exchange program with the US is having some impact on a growing controversy in Peking over re-turning to the approach to education and science that prevailed before the Cultural Revolution. (Page 1)

We have further evidence that Sihanouk and the Khmer Communists will maintain their tough stance on a cease-fire and negotiations. (Page 2)

The Soviet leadership is walking a thin line between extolling detente and urging the communist movement to remain vigilant against ideological subversion. (Page 3)

Notes [] the departure of Soviet ships from the Persian Gulf, and Indian grain purchases appear on Page 5.

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CHINA

There is a growing controversy in China over returning to traditional trends in education and science that may be related to politicking before the 10th Party Congress. The exchange program with the US is also having some impact on this issue.

Much of the debate over education reflects a split between those who favor a return to a more traditional university system and those who argue for retention of the heavily politicized system introduced during the Cultural Revolution. Authorities in Liaoning Province, for example, have publicly criticized the reinstatement of college entrance examinations, charging they are designed to screen out the children of workers and to turn academic institutions into training grounds for "intellectual aristocrats."

Reports by some Chinese delegations that have toured the US have also drawn criticism. In one case, a group of doctors was accused of being overly enthusiastic about things American.

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The heart of these controversies is the conflict of politically motivated activists versus experts that has plagued China for nearly two decades. The present trend in favor of the experts was almost certain to be opposed by Madame Mao and the militants. Others may have joined the debate for tactical reasons in preparation for the Party Congress.

Although the exchange program with the US has figured in these domestic disputes, the general policy of improving relations with Washington does not seem to be at issue.

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no major reversal of current trends is in prospect.

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CAMBODIA

Further evidence has appeared that Sihanouk and the Khmer Communists will maintain their hard line on a cease-fire and negotiations.

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Sihanouk indicated his "government's" negotiating policy and tactics would depend on the military situation in Cambodia.

Sihanouk claimed he and members of his political front group (FUNK) in Peking--in collusion with in-country insurgent leaders--had agreed some months ago that if a military stalemate should evolve in Cambodia, they would negotiate. If, on the other hand, it appeared that the Lon Nol regime would collapse under military pressure, FUNK would see no need for talks. Sihanouk said this second option is now governing FUNK's policy.

Sihanouk reaffirmed his position that FUNK would not discuss the mechanics of its "take-over" with any Phnom Penh group that included or represented members of the High Political Council. He added that the FUNK Central Committee would determine his own role in any talks.

Sihanouk noted that it was no longer possible for Washington to arrange discussions between the two Cambodian parties, nor would FUNK agree to talk with the US or other foreign powers about internal Cambodian affairs. He indicated, however, that he would be willing to meet Senator Mansfield because he is a personal friend and is a "good friend of Cambodia."

Although these comments are dated, they are generally consistent with Sihanouk's most recent public statements. More important, however, the current Khmer Communist offensive in the Phnom Penh area underscores the insurgents' determination to try the military option that Sihanouk described. Insurgent intercepts continue to call for a "military victory."

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USSR

The Soviet leadership is trying to walk a thin line between extolling detente and convincing the population and fraternal parties of the need to remain vigilant against ideological subversion. Several leaders have spoken on these subjects since Brezhnev's return from his trips to Bonn, Washington, and Paris. None has expressed any reservations about detente, nor is there any evidence of important institutional opposition to that policy. Even the Soviet military--led by Marshal Grechko--have strongly supported current policies.

Brezhnev hinted at the existence of reservations about detente in the USSR and among its allies when he observed, in his Lenin Peace Prize speech on July 11, that moving from confrontation to peace is not easy. He offered implicit reassurance that Soviet leaders would remain vigilant, but reaffirmed his commitment to detente and said that the USSR must also be ready to head off any attempt to resume the cold war.

Two days later Brezhnev, addressing Communists at home and abroad, said that the USSR's foreign policy ensures better relations among Communist states and promotes unity among the Communist parties of the world. He ended by noting that implementation of the "Soviet peace program" is likely to diminish the danger of a new war.

Brezhnev's words could very well be aimed at critics who suspect that detente may weaken the socialist bloc and the world movement.

Suslov, the party's ideologue, speaking on the same occasion--the 70th anniversary of Lenin's Bolshevik Party--reminded his audience of Lenin's bitter quarrels with other leftist leaders over the need for a highly centralized and disciplined organization. He endorsed detente, but pointed out that the Soviet party, just last April, had called for vigilance against "imperialist" schemes and hostile ideology.

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Since then, many Soviet commentators have discussed detente and the questions that it has raised. They have defended it as a long-term phenomenon representing the USSR's best interests--as well as those of the other socialist countries, the international communist movement, and all mankind--from which benefits have already begun to flow. They have also reassured critics that the leadership will not be "too trusting" vis-a-vis the "capitalists," that Soviet military strength will be preserved, and that trade with capitalists will not open the door to "penetration" or "exploitation" of the Soviet economy.

Commentators have also said that the USSR will not desert its socialist allies and will continue to support aspirations of "national liberation" movements. Such commentators warn that the recent relaxation of international tension does not mean for anyone in the communist movement that it is time for peaceful coexistence on the ideological front.

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NOTES



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USSR-Iraq: Three Soviet naval ships have ended a month's stay in the Persian Gulf. A naval repair ship remains behind, probably in support of Iraqi naval port and coastal defense construction near Umm Qasr.

India: Since mid-June New Delhi has purchased about 1.5 million tons of wheat and coarse grains, mainly from the US

This is still far short of the 4.5 million tons that the Indians hope to obtain before the harvest begins in late October. Meanwhile, India is experiencing another erratic monsoon, but it is still too early to forecast its impact on the fall harvest.

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